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SUBJECT: COUNTRY TEAM AID PROPOSALS FOR CASAMANCE

REFS: A)1 June 2006 Evaluation of the USAID Peace-

Building Program in Casamance and Sub-Region;

B)Dakar 1204

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR JANICE L. JACOBS FOR REASONS 1.4
(B) AND (D).

SUMMARY

1. (C) The Country Team met June 14 to discuss ways to move the Casamance peace process forward. We raised two central questions. First was whether the Senegalese Government and MFDC rebel movement have sufficient political will to resolve the conflict. Second was whether USG money could make a significant positive difference. We believe President Wade has a genuine desire and vision for peace. His approach, though, has been incoherent, hampered by lack of know-how and hidden agendas among those responsible for executing his orders.

2. (C) We also affirmed that U.S. pressure and financial aid has earned us a reputation as an engaged, neutral, knowledgeable and trustworthy intermediary. Based on this political capital, we concluded that strategic USG financial assistance could make a positive impact. To support transformational diplomacy with implications for Senegal's reintegration, growth and sub-regional diplomacy, our recommendations for future aid include resources of USD 3.0 million/year from FY07 to FY09. END SUMMARY

APPLYING LESSONS LEARNED TO CORE OBJECTIVES

3. (C) Progress in the Casamance peace process has been frustratingly slow, but three years of halting movement toward peace and return of some refugees have provided a basis to examine which assistance should be reinforced. We have been able to gauge: 1) the extent of GOS and MFDC engagement in the peace process; 2) that the Gambian and Bissau-Guinean governments are now willing to contribute to rather than hamper peace; 3) Casamancais acceptance of the U.S. as intermediary, and, 4) thanks to an internal AID evaluation (REF A), the relative efficacy with which different forms of assistance have contributed to the peace process.

4. (SBU) Presidential and legislative elections are to be held in February 2007, and there are few signs the GOS will launch major initiatives in the Casamance until then. This period will provide an excellent opportunity to build on lessons learned, by fine tuning a practical approach to address key drivers of conflict and by mapping out a

strategy to persuade the new government to make Casamance a priority. Our overall objectives are to encourage GOS-MFDC dialog, build capacities for a transparent peace process, and intensify civil society's role in resolving the conflict at community and national levels.

NO WAR/NO PEACE AS OF JUNE 2006

¶15. (C) President Wade recently assigned Mbaye Jacques Diop of the Council of the Republic for Social and Economic Affairs, officially the number four person within the GOS, as Casamance advisor. Still, many believe his predecessor, General Fall, retains dominant influence on Casamance issues. Some suspect that for a number of reasons, including financial ones, Fall is hampering progress toward peace.

¶16. (C) Diop told the Ambassador May 31 the Casamance is "evolving." He said an earlier meeting with DCM Jackson, AID/Senegal Director Carduner and a representative of PADCO, the USAID-financed consultants who offer training in interest-based negotiations to the GOS, MFDC and civil society, had been fruitful. When asked if Guinea-Bissau armed forces' intervention to suppress MFDC recalcitrant Salif Sadio had been helpful, Diop replied it had, that Sadio was weakened and wanted to negotiate. He said the GOS hopes for a second round of negotiations with the MFDC after the rainy season, in late September or October. Diop said the GOS had an action plan for Casamance reconstruction once peace talks succeed, and had set up agencies whose mission is economic revitalization.

¶17. (SBU) Within the MFDC, there appears to be continued but creakingly slow progress toward unity, though some increasingly question the competence of aging MFDC political leader Abbe Diamacoune Senghor. Sadio hard-liners and the pro-peace factions of the MFDC are intermittently talking and fighting, while the recent clashes left thousands more people displaced on both sides of the Guinea-Bissau and Gambian borders. The International Committee of the Red Cross described the situation as "worrisome but not alarming."

SHARPER STRATEGY: CHOOSING WHAT LEADS TO PEACE

¶18. (SBU) Both our significant and our modest successes have provided valuable lessons in what contributes directly to peace. Ref A indicates AID has gotten most bang for the buck with conflict resolution programs at the community level. This has included reconstruction of housing and village infrastructure, and emphasized projects implemented by women's groups. It indicates that rebuilding economic livelihoods, while "very relevant," was "too thinly spread and focused on micro-finance."

¶19. (C) Ref A found that conflict resolution at the political level, due to personnel turnover in the GOS and rivalries among rebels, had to date had only moderate success. Despite this, it concluded the U.S. should "emphasize more political and cross-border aspects of conflict dynamics."

¶10. (C) A sharper U.S. strategy can counter Casamancais' growing perception, based on dramatically reduced funding, that the USG is pulling out. We can capitalize on investments already made, focus limited funding on areas that show most promise, and build on the unique foundation the U.S. has established. The World Bank, European Union and UNDP are ready with funds for humanitarian demining, economic development and disarmament, demobilization and reinsertion programs. (The U.S. is also contributing to demining with FY06 and 07 funding.) This offers excellent opportunity to maximize U.S. investment by coordinating with other donors. A sustainable peace accord is prerequisite, though, and only the U.S. can play the pivotal role in the peace process.

BUILDING A FLEXIBLE STRATEGIC PLAN

¶11. (C) A strategic and sustainable plan must retain macro and micro level activities and build links between the two. The Casamance population, most internal MFDC factions and President Wade want peace, but they have been unable to move much beyond ceasefire.

-- The first element of our plan would include policy dialog at the national level, centering on issues such as demining, setting a joint MFDC/GOS peace talk agenda, identifying key negotiating parties, and advocating an end to use of discretionary or "black" funding. This could include, when needed, services of a special facilitator or mediator.

-- Second, we will continue to provide technical aid to GOS and MFDC in conflict resolution and negotiations, and we would add communications and intra-party strategic planning. To assure continuity, this would entail full time engagement of a mediator with Casamance expertise.

-- Mediation and reconciliation by civil society is essential to establish peace. Our third tack would be to assist civil society to apply pressure for reaching a peace accord, and to play an expanded and meaningful role in the peace process. The U.S. will also contribute to building trust between the GOS, MFDC and civil society.

-- Offering concrete dividends has proved an especially effective contribution to the peace process according to Ref A. We should, as a fourth measure, help to build small community infrastructure such as wells, classrooms, health huts and houses. To have an impact on peace, these projects require a minimum number of beneficiaries and must be designed with an integrated peace-building component anchored in community reconciliation. Budgets for these projects are insufficient, even with small DOD, Self Help, and HRDF activities redesigned to support peacebuilding, since there are no AID funds available for a large-scale program. Finally, we will continue to support DOS and DOD efforts in humanitarian demining. This will start with USD 92,000 in FY06 funds for mine risk education and victims' assistance, and lead eventually, once a peace agreement has been signed, to actual humanitarian demining activities in concert with the Senegalese National Demining Commission and our international partners.

-- Fifth, to leverage public diplomacy and encourage the broader Senegalese public to support the peace process, we will enhance strategic public affairs coverage of our aid to civil society.

SPECIFIC MEASURES

¶12. (C) Seven years of AID technical aid in the Casamance, heavy Embassy political engagement since at least 2003 and DOD interaction with the Senegalese military have made the U.S. one of only two external actors with extensive knowledge of the conflict's dynamics and the trust of both GOS and MFDC. (The other is the International Red Cross.) The Embassy will continue to actively encourage the peace process, while AID will set aside funding for possible engagement of a special mediator.

¶13. (C) Technical assistance to the peace process is a core element of our strategy, and will focus on building capacity to manage and participate in a peace process. A key element of this is working with each side, and especially the MFDC, to clarify interests and positions. This will be achieved via training workshops, facilitated dialogs and other means of building relationships of trust. An expert will be engaged to follow the conflict full-time and manage activities. In FY06, AID has in place a program to help advance the peace program that is targeted at the first three areas outlined above. This will build on a \$700,000 project (conducted by PADCO) focusing solely on capacity building in negotiation and

conflict resolution.

¶14. (C) To encourage reconciliation, we will provide seed projects, which are sub-grants with integrated, stand-alone objectives. They will include advocacy campaigns by local leaders and organizations to press the GOS and MFDC to work toward peace. The seed projects may also encourage specific groups such as women, youth, locally elected officials or schools and students to continue building support for peace at community level. In addition, the Ambassador's Fund for Refugees and DHRF funding will support, among other projects, a community radio network reaching out to refugees. ODC plans FY06 school construction in the key town of Sindian.

¶15. (C) There are insufficient funds to fully implement the Mission's integrated and comprehensive Casamance strategy. The Country Team suggests a budget of USD 3.0 million/year for FY07 - 09 to accomplish the five-pronged strategy outlined above.

JACOBS